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## Chapter 18 Collaboration for Victims' Rights and Services

### Abstract

The ultimate success of victims' rights and services is highly dependent on involvement and input from a wide variety of individuals and entities whose foci include public safety. Over the past three decades, numerous collaborative efforts and partnerships have effected significant, positive changes in the ways victims are viewed, treated, and served in the United States. This chapter will explore the concept of collaboration, along with recommended strategies for successful collaborative efforts to enhance public safety and improve victim services.

Upon completion of this chapter, students will understand the following concepts:

- Types of working relationships.
- Challenges to successful working relationships.
- Moving beyond "traditional" stakeholders for collaborative initiatives.
- The community as a partner in collaboration.
- The relationships among national, state, and local victim services.
- A checklist for successful collaborative efforts.

### Introduction

Let us not be blind to our differences, but let us also direct attention to our common interests and the means by which those differences can be resolved. And if we cannot end now our differences, at least we can help make the world safe for diversity. --John F. Kennedy, 1963

While the strength of America's victims' rights discipline is greatly derived from the commitment of victims who have been hurt by crime, and by victim advocates who serve them, many significant successes have been achieved through collaboration with other individuals and entities who share a concern for public safety. There is, indeed, strength in numbers, and when diverse interests converge for an agenda of victims' rights and services, the possibilities are endless.

In the early days of the victims' rights movement, there was often a pervading sense of "us against them," that is, victims and service providers struggling for

dignity and acknowledgment against a variety of barriers: offenders' rights taking precedence over victims' rights; lack of understanding within communities about victim suffering and trauma; a justice system that was not, in the early 1970s and 1980s, designed to protect the interests of victims nor involve them in key processes that affected their lives; limited laws that protected victims' rights and interests; and limited financial and human resources to support victim-related initiatives, to name a few. The pioneers of victims' rights looked to similar movements for guidance in how to build both an agenda and a constituency.

The lessons learned from women who fought for the right to vote and civil rights activists who struggled for equality proved to be invaluable. While many elements contributed to the success of these historical efforts, one common theme emerged: The ability to collaborate and find supporters who shared a common vision and goals was critical to success. Perhaps most important was to reach beyond the core constituencies affected by injustice (in these cases, women who could not vote and persons of color who were treated as second-class citizens) and build a powerful, diverse collaborative network of allies.

Also similar to earlier initiatives that strived for equal justice, crime victims had a significant weapon in their struggle for dignity, respect, and recognition: *the power of the personal story*. With hundreds of thousands of individuals in America personally hurt by crime, there was a core constituency of "real people with real pain" to whom many ordinary people could relate: the family whose grandparents were killed in a fiery drunk driving crash (which was not even considered a crime thirty years ago); the rape victim who was blamed and shamed for the violent assault committed against her; the mother whose teenage son was molested by his soccer coach who found limited protection under the law; and the countless families whose children were abducted, often found murdered, and sometimes never recovered at all. Some of the most crucial "networks" that resulted were victims helping victims by providing mutual support and validation. The network of victims and their collaboration with caring and concerned professionals joined to create an effective social activism that has come to change the face of how justice and public safety are viewed in America.

### **Types of Working Relationships**

There are many phrases utilized in the victim assistance community to describe efforts that bring people together with a common cause. George Keiser of the National Institute of Corrections (1998) describes these terms and their meanings:

Some recurring words are often used in a very cavalier fashion to describe types of working relationships. It is important to be clear about the depth of involvement contained in the meaning of these various words, and then to use the appropriate word for the relevant circumstances.

These words include cooperation, coordination, collaboration, and partnership.

## **COOPERATION**

Cooperation does not require much depth of relationship from the parties involved. Typically, a couple of people identify how what they are doing in their organizations would benefit each other. They agree to share what they do, but are not required to do anything differently. The activities engaged in are very informal. No resources are transferred, and the life of those involved goes on much as it has. This maybe the initial point of developing relationships between the involved organizations. A key element for initiating cooperation is personal trust.

## **COORDINATION**

Like cooperation, the depth of involvement between organizations is not required to be great. The relationship tends to be more definitive with specific protocols or conventions commonly being established. The business of the various organizations does not change significantly. The number of people involved in the process is increased, and the participants are more cognizant of how their independent activities can be integrated for common benefit, or can influence the work of another organization. This level of working together requires more discipline and more formal structure in following the established protocols. The importance of integrity of the various participants and their activities becomes more apparent.

## **COLLABORATION**

Collaboration introduces the concept of organizations coming together to create something new, commonly a new process. Generally, the organizations bring a business they already know well and identify how, by joint actions, they can redesign a process to their mutual benefit. There must not only be trust and integrity as a foundation, but the parties now need to understand the perspectives of the other collaborators' self interest(s). This understanding suggests a greater depth of involvement between organizations. It is not merely exchanging information, but developing a sense of awareness for whom the other parties are, what motivates them, and what they need out of working together. Unlike cooperation or coordination, for the first time something new is being developed through the relationship of organizations. Even with the increased intensity of involvement, the various organizations retain their independent identities.

## **PARTNERSHIP**

Partnership is the bringing together of individuals or organizations to create a new entity. This may be the extreme extension of collaboration. The depth of involvement is reflected by a commitment referred to as ownership. No longer are there independent organizations agreeing to work together on some initiative as long as it is convenient. Nor is this a group of organizations buying into

someone else's plan. With a partnership, there is an agreement to create something new which, through joint ownership, requires that the partners make it succeed. One measure of success is whether the partnership makes all the partners successful (Keiser 1998).

Keiser also clarifies the nature of working relationships based on the following elements:

- Characteristics of the relationship.
- Nature of the relationship.
- Involvement.
- Resource investment.
- Control over resources.
- Authority to make decisions.

The chart below provides an overview of characteristics of working relationships on a continuum ranging from coordination to partnership.

**Types of Working Relationships**

Elements	Cooperation	Coordination	Collaboration	Partnership
<b>Characteristics of Relationship</b>	Trust and Reliability	Integrity and Discipline	Understanding and Selflessness	Commitment and Ownership
<b>Nature of Relationship</b>	Informal, Ad-hoc	Semi-formal	Formal	Formal, Legal Incorporation
<b>Involvement</b>	As few as two people	Several, maybe horizontal organizational slice	Several, many horizontal and vertical organizational slices	New or refined organization
<b>Resource Investment</b>	Minimal	Moderate	Major	Major
<b>Control over Resource</b>	Unchanged original organizations	Modified original organizations	Shared or transfer to new unit	Legally binding
<b>Authority to Make Decisions</b>	Retained by original organizations	Retained by original organizations	Transfer to new unit	Create new structure

## **Reciprocal Forbearance: A Framework for Working Relationships**

In *Reciprocal Forbearance: How to Collaborate and Be Successful*, Iowa's Sixth Judicial District Department of Correctional Services Director Gerald Hinzman describes the environment in which public safety professionals work (1994):

Who are our customers? Are they the people we help or are they the people who pay the tax bill? Who are our internal customers within the governmental system with whom we should be working and collaborating? Do we see those who need our services as the poor and needy, or do we see them as burdens on society? If we look at a group or family of people, do we all see them through the same set of eyes? What do human services agencies see? What do public service agencies see? Do private non-profits see this differently than publicly funded agencies? Does it or should it make a difference how we see our customers in order for us to collaborate?

This is what reciprocal forbearance is all about! We must understand that we have different missions and that we may have different philosophies, but within the framework of that understanding is the structure to collaborate to design programs that will have an effect on all the issues affecting the target populations that we jointly serve. Reciprocal forbearance means that we understand what makes us different from those who look like us, those who are not like us, and those we're not sure about, and we tolerate our differences so that we can jointly design a better future for our children and our children's children. . . .

In order to collaborate, we must remain open-minded. This is something else that bureaucratic agencies do not do well. Open-mindedness is something that also needs to be learned. The following illustration helps guide our thoughts on this.

There are basically four ways that we can react to another person presenting a thought or expressing an idea to us:

1. We like or respect the person or agency that is putting forth the idea, and we like the thought or idea that they are espousing.
2. We like or respect the person or agency that is putting forth the idea, but we don't like or question the wisdom of the thought or idea.
3. We don't respect the person or the agency that puts forth the message, but we agree that the thought or idea has merit.
4. We don't respect the agency or person, and we don't think there is much merit in the thought.

If we are close-minded, we are only able to do number one and number four above. If we are open-minded, we can and should process all four options so that we can make wise choices.

Now answering the original question as to whether or not we all have to see our customers through the same set of eyes, the answer is "no." We all do need to

see our missions as compatible. As we redefine the critical issues, do capacity building, and collaborate, we have the flexibility to continue on our own mission and see more clearly how we are all part of the overall solution.

### **Challenges to Successful Working Relationships**

Whether victim advocates cooperate, coordinate, collaborate, or partner with allied professionals, volunteers, and communities, there are ten common challenges that can hinder the success of these important working relationships:

1. *Lack of a shared vision or mission.* When people work together toward a common goal, it should be clearly understood, easily communicated, and shared by all involved parties. If a vision or mission is pre-established by an individual or a small faction of a larger group, it may not achieve "ownership" that is needed by the whole group to ensure success. It is crucial to take time and process through a shared vision or mission with all stakeholders and establish goals and objectives that are supported by all.
2. *Lack of agreement about the problem or issue to be addressed.* While diversity is one of the essential elements of collaborative efforts, it also results in differing and often unique perspectives about the basic issue that is being addressed. In developing good working relationships, stakeholders must seek a consensus that respects different views and opinions.
3. *Lack of incremental successes on the pathway to an ultimate goal.* Too often, people working together aim for one definitive goal that, in their view, connotes success. It is necessary to determine incremental, smaller successes that can help stakeholders ensure that they are headed in the right direction, and evaluate possible alternatives along the way to the ultimate goal if warranted.
4. *Egos.* The concept of "turf wars" is not foreign to most victim advocates. When such battles expand to incorporate even more stakeholders (and more egos), the results can be highly damaging to collaborative efforts. All interested parties must be willing to breakdown turf barriers and "leave their egos at the door" in their mutual attempts to reach a common goal.
5. *Lack of diversity among group members working toward a common goal.* If it is true that "great minds think alike," it is likely that "different minds think even better." One of the greatest strengths of professionals and volunteers involved in public safety issues is their diversity--by gender, age, culture, sexual orientation, profession, socioeconomic status, and geography. The many different viewpoints and perspectives of victim advocates and allied professionals are a key asset to collaborative efforts and, without them, such efforts are doomed to failure.

6. *Not having the "right players" at the table.* In many public safety initiatives, often the victims and their representatives are missing from collaboration forums. It is helpful to adopt a "global" view of the problem or issue that is being addressed in terms of *all* the stakeholders who are affected: victims, offenders, the community, system professionals, public policy makers, and the like. If a person or group of people is affected by a problem, it is absolutely critical that they be involved in developing a solution!
7. *Lack of understanding and implementation of change management techniques.* Most working relationships seek change: in justice processes, service delivery, and community involvement, to cite a few examples. If the road to a solution does not address the specific changes that will occur as a result and institutionalize these changes for the future, the outcomes will not be successful in the long run. Managing change is one of the most difficult, yet most important, elements of collaborative efforts.
8. *Lack of resources.* If time, level of commitment, and human or financial resources are not adequate to achieve a shared goal, failure is likely. Considerable attention should be paid to what type of resources are needed, at what point, by whom, and for how long, throughout the collaborative process.
9. *Lack of measures to evaluate success.* As stakeholders in collaborative processes begin their joint efforts, evaluation must be a key tenet of all their activities. Stakeholders' vision, goals, and objectives should all be measurable in concrete terms, and their plan should be flexible enough to accommodate changes that result from evaluative data that show a need to change course.
10. *Lack of understanding about victim trauma, rights, and needs.* While most collaborative efforts related to improving public and personal safety are well intentioned, some lack an overall understanding of how victims are affected by crime. It is important to incorporate training about victims' rights, needs, trauma, and sensitivity into any collaborative initiative that addresses public safety issues. The involvement of crime victims as active participants or advisors to guide the planning and implementation of such initiatives is also helpful.

### **Beyond Traditional Collaboration**

In issues affecting crime and victimization, there are several conventional stakeholders: crime victims, service providers, and juvenile and criminal justice officials and agencies (from law enforcement through the appellate process). Today there are new and exciting partnerships forming between victims, their allies, and disciplines whose foci include issues relevant to crime and victimization. Victim advocates need to closely evaluate *exactly who resides in the orbit around victimization*. These partnerships, while surprising in some

cases, offer new, important alliances in the fight against crime and efforts to aid victims. They are identified below:

- *Members of the clergy* are often professionals to whom victims turn following the crisis of victimization. As such, clergy members are important partners in any effort that seeks to help victims cope with trauma and loss. For example, clergy members were key partners in the Colorado-Oklahoma Resource Council (CORC) that was created to assist and support victims who attended the Oklahoma City bombing/murder trials in Denver, Colorado in 1998.
- *Mental health and public health professionals and agencies* possess expertise and resources that can assist victims of crime. When violence was cited as a major public health concern by the Surgeon General, a variety of partnerships emerged that combined the knowledge and practical experience of health professionals with professionals in public safety and victim assistance. In 1998, the Centers for Disease Control provided a five-year grant to a consortium of mental health and victimology researchers and practitioners to form the National Violence Against Women Prevention Research Consortium. The Consortium fosters interdisciplinary research and resources among researchers, practitioners, criminal justice agencies, and public health officials.
- *Public policy makers* have historically had a significant role in effecting changes in laws that define and protect victims' rights. In recent years, state legislators, state-level executive branch officials, and local elected officials have worked closely with crime victims and advocates to forge public policy agendas dedicated to victims' rights and public protection. In 1998, the Council of State Governments Northeast Region (with support from OVC) sponsored a regional symposium with representatives from ten states, including victims, service providers, legislators, and justice professionals, to develop public policy recommendations and action plans for their respective states, specific to improving victims' rights and services.
- *The news media* wield tremendous influence over public policy and program development in the disciplines of victim assistance and public safety. Timely information about trends in crime and victimization, model programs, and responsive public policy is available to concerned citizens, elected officials, justice practitioners and victim advocates through the news media. In a number of communities, informal partnerships have emerged through regular "bench-bar-press" sessions, in which the news media and justice professionals (which can include law enforcement, judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, and victim advocates) meet to discuss media coverage of trials and public safety issues. These sessions often result in collaborative efforts to increase responsible news media

coverage and create avenues through which the media have access to timely, accurate information for their stories.

- *Researchers and practitioners in the field of substance abuse* have much to contribute to the discipline of victimology. Many crimes are committed while offenders are under the influence of alcohol or other drugs, and many victims (particularly of domestic violence) live in environments where substance abuse is pervasive. Numerous research studies have shown that some victims use alcohol, prescription drugs, and even illegal drugs following their victimization to cope with trauma. Unfortunately, alcohol and other drugs are the stress reducer of choice for professionals involved in high-stress occupations, such as victim services. Collaborative efforts focusing on substance abuse treatment, education about the devastating effects of alcohol and other drugs (particularly related to crime and victimization), and drug abuse prevention offer meaningful insights to the field of victim services.

These five examples are indicative of the types of natural allies who can join together to improve victims' rights and services. Collaborative efforts such as these can be developed at the local, state, and national levels as well as across these jurisdictions. If an individual or entity is in a position to further the cause of victims' rights and the provision of quality victim services, then they have a rightful and meaningful role in collaborative networks and coalitions.

## **SIGNIFICANT FEDERAL SUPPORT FOR COLLABORATION AND INTEGRATED SERVICES**

The Office for Victims of Crime is currently sponsoring and funding an ongoing demonstration project, *Victim Services 2000* (VS 2000). The greater Denver, Colorado area, the state of Vermont, and Medina County, Ohio are all developing and implementing an integrated victim service system to improve the range, quality, and accessibility of services for crime victims. The goal of the grants is to support the development of an integrated victim service system that will provide an on-going vehicle for planning and implementing comprehensive, coordinated, and accessible services to the victims of crime. The sites are intended to be mentors for other communities, providing on and off site technical assistance.

Denver VS 2000 is in its third year. Its leadership group is well established, and twenty-three agencies are VS 2000 members, representing both governmental and non-profit agencies in the Denver metropolitan area. Based on the results of various community and victim surveys and focus groups, Denver has been involved in addressing major issue areas/goals:

- *Technology.* Apply relevant technologies to improve the delivery of services to victims by developing an online Resource Directory; a Technical Assistance Center on the VS 2000 Web site for all technical

assistance materials, and an online case management system for use by member agencies.

- *Model Network Development.* Develop policies and procedures to implement a case management system across member agencies; train agency personnel on the case management system; develop a memorandum of understanding for joint agency outreach initiatives, and establish Community Advocates in several communities with high underserved populations. The Advocates will inform victims of their rights and the services available and to be a link between victims, service providers and the criminal justice system.
- *Training and Education.* Institutionalize training in all aspects of delivery of service to victims of crime by developing a cross training plan within victim service agencies, and standardized training for professional groups and schools, including spiritual communities, law enforcement and law schools.

Medina County, Ohio is beginning its second year; Vermont is completing its first year. Both have completed their planning and assessment process from which they have identified issues and goals similar to Denver's. Each of the three sites has developed slightly different systems tailored to their respective jurisdiction to provide on-going planning and implementation.

### **The Community as a Partner in Collaboration**

A theory that is gaining much credence across America is that when neighborhoods or communities are *given the opportunity* to be involved in measures to prevent crime, intervene with at-risk youth, and assist victims, they will take advantage of that opportunity. It makes great sense that people who are most affected by a problem are the ones who have the greatest stake in developing effective solutions.

Joseph Lehman, the Secretary of the Department of Corrections in the state of Washington, said in 1997 that "the community must own justice." This sense of ownership not only of the problems related to justice, but also to potential solutions, has provided a strong foundation in many communities that have involved their members in collaborative measures to combat crime and help victims. The recent trend toward community policing, community prosecution, community courts, and community justice has resulted in strong partnerships among justice practitioners, community members, and neighborhood groups. Victim service providers can have a significant role in such collaborative endeavors. To do so, they need to develop contacts with allied community groups and professionals (where applicable) and seek avenues of involvement.

The U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance *Bulletin* "Working as Partners With Community Groups" points out

. . . [W]orking in partnership with community members and groups is an effective and productive way to address a community's problems and needs. This effectiveness can translate into less crime, less fear of crime, and a greater sense of community power and cohesion. Law enforcement officers have long known that they cannot successfully deal alone with the twin issues of responding to crime, and correcting the conditions that generate crime. Partnerships to prevent crime can get something done about an immediate problem, build a base for dealing with future problems, gain new resources for action, and increase or sustain the community's social and economic health. They are among the most promising assets in the ongoing struggle against violence and other crimes" (National Crime Prevention Council 1994).

This *Bulletin* also offers an excellent example of how partners in public safety are identified:

Potential partners will come from among those groups directly affected by the current problem, those who must deal with its aftermath or consequences, and those who would benefit if the problem did not exist. For example, if graffiti are the problem, those directly affected include business owners and home owners, other area residents, and highway and park departments. Those who must deal with the consequences include insurers, residents, traffic control personnel, elected officials, and law enforcement. People who would benefit if the problem did not exist include realtors, the chamber of commerce, neighborhood residents, and school and youth programs that could use funds otherwise spent on cleanups. All these people are potential partners (Ibid.).

When this approach to forming partnerships is applied to "who is affected by crime and victimization," the list of potential partnerships is seemingly endless. Literally *everybody* has a stake in individual and community safety and, as such, everybody has a similar stake in ensuring that people who are hurt by crime have comprehensive, quality services to assist them.

### **The Relationship of Victim Services: National, State, and Local**

Many important issues and common interests unite the various jurisdictions of victims' rights and services. When this discipline is closely examined in its entirety, there are both clear distinctions as well as significant connections among national, state, and local victim service providers and allied professionals.

#### **NATIONAL LEVEL: FEDERAL AGENCIES**

The federal government has provided outstanding leadership to the field of victim services. The Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, infuses victims' rights and services into the bureaus and offices under its control. These entities often join in cooperative agreements that combine both human and financial resources to benefit crime victims and those who serve them.

Most notable is the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) which, among other contributions, provides support for the National Victim Assistance Academy. OVC manages the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding, which provides support for federal, state, and local victim services as well as victim compensation at the federal and state levels. These funds come from convicted federal offenders, not from taxpayer dollars. Through its discretionary dollars, OVC funds extensive training and technical assistance initiatives that have had a far-reaching effect on improving the scope and quality of victim services across the nation. In addition, OVC has a Resource Center and Training and Technical Assistance Center that strengthens the capabilities of victim service providers, criminal and juvenile justice agencies, and allied professionals to provide comprehensive victim services.

Other OJP offices that provide guidance and resources to support victims' rights and services are the following:

- *Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA)*, which makes direct discretionary grant awards to states, units of local government, and private nonprofit groups for the support of state and local criminal justice system initiatives, including victim assistance services. Examples of BJA initiatives include funding for judicial training through the National Judicial College, support for Chicago's Family Violence Intervention Program, and trial security expenses for the capital murder trials of the murderers of James Byrd, Jr. in 1999.
- *Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS)*, which supports initiatives that improve the collection and automated maintenance of criminal history information, data on crime and victimization, and statistics on crime and justice.
- *Community Oriented Policing (COPS) Office*, whose programs often include supportive services, timely interventions, and assistance for victims and communities affected by crime, as well as numerous crime prevention initiatives that are accomplished through partnerships between law enforcement and neighborhoods and communities.
- *Corrections Program Office (CPO)*, which has collaborated with OVC on improving rights and services for victims in the postsentencing phases of their cases within institutional corrections.
- *Drug Courts Program Office*, which administers the discretionary drug court grant program to plan, establish, or enhance state and local drug courts that provide specialized treatment and rehabilitation for certain nonviolent substance abusing offenders.
- *Executive Office of Weed and Seed (EOWS)*, which administers a discretionary grant program that supports multidisciplinary community-based initiatives for law enforcement, crime prevention, victim assistance, and community revitalization.

- *National Institute of Justice (NIJ)*, the "research arm" of the Justice Department which supports research, program evaluation, and demonstration projects. Some of NIJ's initiatives have provided significant insights into child abuse, fraud, sexual assault, domestic violence, stalking, and homicide. NIJ also emphasizes the importance of partnerships between researchers and practitioners to improve the nation's response to crime and victimization and crime prevention.
- *Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency and Prevention (OJJDP)*, which provides leadership and resources to improve America's juvenile justice system. Its victim-related initiatives include programs that address missing and exploited children and child protection issues.
- *Violence Against Women Grants Office (VAWGO)*, which provides leadership and funding for federal, state, and local programs dedicated to assisting victims of family violence and sexual assault. Special initiatives sponsored by VAWGO focus on encouraging arrest policies in domestic violence cases, rural domestic violence and child abuse enforcement assistance, and discretionary grants to address violence against women in Indian Country and rural jurisdictions.

In addition, other federal agencies have sponsored victim-related initiatives in research, evaluation, program development, training, and technical assistance. Examples include the Centers for Disease Control, Department of Education, National Institute of Mental Health, and Health and Human Services. OVC has also sponsored cooperative programs that benefit victims with agencies such as the Department of State, Department of the Treasury, and all branches of the armed forces. National training conferences sponsored every other year by OVC bring together federal victim assistance personnel to share information, resources, and program development ideas that enhance victims' rights and services.

## **NATIONAL LEVEL: NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS**

In 1999, nearly fifty national organizations exist whose mission and goals include the enhancement of victims' rights and services. The Victims' Assistance Legal Organization, National Center for Victims of Crime, National Organization for Victim Assistance, National Crime Victims Research and Treatment Center, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Parents of Murdered Children, National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Family Violence Prevention Fund, National Coalition Against Sexual Assault, and Concerns of Police Survivors (among others) focus primarily on improving rights and services for victims of crime. These organizations offer resources that include organizational and program development, information and referral, training and technical assistance, research and evaluation, public policy development and implementation, and community outreach and public education.

Allied professional organizations, such as the National Criminal Justice Association, International Association of Chiefs of Police, National District Attorneys Association, National Judicial College, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, Association of State Correctional Administrators, American Correctional Association, American Probation and Parole Association, and Association of Paroling Authorities, International, incorporate victims' rights and concerns into their public policy, training and technical assistance, and research initiatives. Most of these membership associations now have Victim Committees and Advisory Boards that keep them informed of and involved in key collaborative issues related to victims' rights and services. They have a significant role in keeping their constituencies aware of the need for, and current trends in, victims' rights and services, and they work closely with national, state, and local victim assistance programs to enhance victim assistance efforts in their respective areas of interest.

## **STATE LEVEL: VICTIM ASSISTANCE**

Every state and U.S. territory has agencies that oversee planning and distribution of federal funds authorized by the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), Byrne Memorial Funds, and Department of Health and Human Services (specific to domestic violence, child protection, and child abuse). In some states, these roles fall under the jurisdiction of a single agency. Every state and territory also has a victim compensation program that oversees the remuneration of victims for losses suffered as a result of violent crime, which is derived from a combination of VOCA funding; state funding; and fines, fees and assessments paid by convicted offenders.

In 1999, over thirty-five states also have state-level coalitions that are dedicated to improving victims' rights and services through collaboration with victim assistance, criminal and juvenile justice, and allied professional entities. State-level efforts include research, training and technical assistance, information and referral, and collaborative observances of commemorative weeks such as National Crime Victims' Rights Week in April, and National Domestic Violence Awareness Month in October. State coalition efforts have also contributed to public policy development and implementation that benefits victims, which has resulted in the passage of over 30,000 state-level statutes that define and protect victims' rights.

Similar to national justice and allied professional associations, many state-level associations have initiated victim committees and advisory boards that incorporate victims' rights and concerns as a core component of their public safety, community protection, and crime prevention initiatives. In addition, some state-level agencies have incorporated victims' rights and services into their overall missions. For example, the California Youth Authority (CYA) established an Office of Prevention and Victim Services in 1992. CYA has infused victims' concerns into both the agency and work site level, and has led the nation in developing proactive programs that provide victim notification, restitution,

protection for victims, and the nationally recognized "Impact of Crime on Victims" program for youthful offenders that help them recognize the effects of their delinquent actions on their victims, their own families, their communities, and themselves.

## **LOCAL LEVEL: VICTIM ASSISTANCE**

It is estimated that in 1999, over 9,000 victim assistance organizations operate in both the public and private sectors.

Public sector programs work primarily within the parameters of the criminal and juvenile justice systems to promote victims' rights and provide direct victim services. In some jurisdictions such as Memphis, Tennessee, the public and private sectors have joined forces in collaborative efforts through the Shelby County Victim Assistance Center (which receives both private and government funding and provides a wide range of services to victims of all types of crime).

Private sector programs comprise what is widely recognized and respected as the "grass roots" of the victims' rights discipline. Thousands of nonprofit organizations provide support and comprehensive services to victims through crisis intervention, victim support groups, advocacy for victims' rights within the criminal and juvenile justice systems, training and technical assistance, and information and referral. These groups have increasingly forged important alliances with system-based justice professionals and civic leaders to maintain victims' rights as a public policy priority in communities large and small, urban and rural, across the nation.

### **Collaborating for Victims' Rights and Services**

There are a number of ways that crime victims, service providers, and allied professionals work together at the local, state, and national levels, as follows:

- *Fiduciary relationships* primarily involve financial support from government sources for victim services from the federal level to the states and localities, and from states to local jurisdictions.
- *Public policy initiatives* have led to the passage of over 30,000 federal and state victims' rights statutes. Often, good ideas for laws cross over jurisdictional boundaries. For example, when California passed the nation's first anti-stalking statute in 1990, the other forty-nine states followed suit within eighteen months. The strength of America's grass roots victims movement has also been instrumental in organizing to support key federal initiatives, most notably the proposed federal constitutional amendment, and the successful passage of the Victims of Crime Act of 1984 and the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) of 1994.

- *Implementation of victims' rights* helps ensure that no matter where a victim lives or what type of crime he or she has been hurt by, help is available. With over 9,000 victim assistance programs operating in the public and private sectors, and advocacy services provided by numerous national organizations, collaborative efforts have strengthened crime victims' ability to understand and seek implementation of their rights.
- *Research initiatives* are increasingly involving partnerships between researchers and victim assistance practitioners. National and regional public opinion surveys, research of specific victim populations, and focus groups have been conducted by national, state, and local practitioners, with the results guiding the development of innovative and effective approaches to victim services.
- *Training and technical assistance*, with substantial leadership provided by OVC, to develop curricula and training tools help increase professionals' and volunteers' knowledge of victims' rights and services. Standardized training programs have been developed for law enforcement, the judiciary, prosecutors, institutional and community corrections, and juvenile justice professionals as well as for allied professionals such as mental health and public health practitioners, the clergy, and educators.
- *Information and referral services* constantly cross jurisdictional boundaries to provide timely resources and referrals to victims in every region of the nation. The use of the Internet, national toll-free telephone numbers, and the U.S. Department of Justice-sponsored Resource Centers has greatly enhanced the ability to provide information and referrals to crime victims and concerned citizens.

### **Collaboration: A Checklist for Success**

While this chapter has offered a broad overview of the core elements of successful collaboration, they can be easily summarized in the following twenty points:

1. The problem(s) or issue(s) of concern is clearly defined.
2. All potential stakeholders and key leaders/change agents have been invited to participate in the collaborative initiative:
  - People who live with the problem.
  - People who have power to change the problem.
  - People who have the technical expertise to address the problem.
3. Diversity among stakeholders is sought and respected as a key tenet of collaboration.

4. A mission or vision statement that identifies the critical problems or issues and possible collaborative solutions is developed and shared by all key stakeholders.
5. The problem or issue is analyzed to develop theories about why it is occurring and what can be done to change the situation.
6. Possible strategies or solutions are brainstormed among key stakeholders, with consensus built around the most sound approaches to problem solving or intervention.
7. The consensus strategy is divided into strategic goals and measurable objectives.
8. Goals and objectives are assigned an order of priority, with a sense of urgency given to the highest priority issues.
9. Responsibilities for action are developed and assigned to the relevant stakeholders, with clear understanding of the interrelationships among goals and objectives.
10. A time schedule for completion of goals and objectives is developed that includes tasks, persons responsible, deliverables, and deadlines. This should be flexible, depending upon ongoing evaluation results (see # 14).
11. If necessary, memoranda of understanding and/or interagency agreements are drafted to clarify roles, responsibilities, and interrelationships needed to accomplish the goals and objectives.
12. A list of resources needed for success is developed, which may include research, evaluation, training, technical assistance, marketing, funding, public policy development, direct outreach to core constituents, public education, media relations, and technology enhancements.
13. Stakeholders involved in the collaborative effort assume responsibility (often jointly) for developing and/or providing resources that have been identified as critical to success.
14. Significant attention is paid to evaluation measures that can delineate success or failure. Flexible approaches are in place to allow for revision of original goals and objectives, based upon evaluation results (this is an ongoing process).
15. Methods of ongoing communications and regular meetings for status reviews are institutionalized.
16. A commitment to managing the change that results from the collaborative initiative is institutionalized, with consensus on how stakeholders will each educate their professional peers and volunteers about the positive aspects

of the change and help them adjust to new policies, procedures, and/or programs that result.

17. Small successes and achievements are celebrated, and barriers to success are viewed as surmountable challenges.
18. An assessment of the overall collaborative effort is conducted, with participation of all key stakeholders.
19. Recommendations for revising or "fine-tuning" ongoing strategies for success, based upon the overall evaluation, are developed.
20. Efforts are made to identify other initiatives that could benefit from the collaborative efforts of the key stakeholders involved in this initiative.

### **The Power of Collaboration**

The power inherent in positive collaborative efforts cannot be underestimated. Perhaps the most appropriate perspective on this power is offered by Margaret Mead:

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

Her observations are a fitting description of, and tribute to, the many collaborative efforts that have resulted in positive change for victims of crime since the inception of the victims' rights discipline.

As discussed throughout this chapter, collaboration can occur on many various levels: national, state, and local, involving both private and governmental entities. With respect to successful implementation of and advocacy for the legal rights of crime victims, it is crucial for victim advocates to understand the necessity for (and all too often dearth of) collaboration between, among, and sometimes within criminal and juvenile justice system agencies. A recent study on the management and collection of court-ordered criminal restitution, a remedy traditionally minimized as, at best, a longshot for victims, showed that when jurisdictions employed effective and system-wide cooperative efforts, great improvements could be made in the management and collection of restitution (Burnley and Murray 1997). The following are key factors identified in implementing collaborative efforts:

- Victim involvement.
- Effective communication and cooperation among the criminal justice agencies and professionals.
- Clear definition and delineation of roles.

- Efficient and streamlined coordination of agency tasks.
- Routine and regular flow of information and data.
- Participation and accountability by all parties involved in the process.

Although many justice system officials still treat restitution as an "uncollectible debt," increased systemic collaboration and cooperation have enabled some jurisdictions to make vast improvements to the collection of court-ordered restitution. While the above-mentioned study focuses exclusively on restitution, the principles involved are equally applicable to any and all legal rights of crime victims which are implemented through the traditional criminal justice system.

Another powerful example of victim collaboration, initially involving the efforts of private individuals, is the landmark emergence of Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) in 1980. A young mother whose daughter was killed by a repeat drunk driving offender in California found solace and support from another young Maryland mother whose infant daughter had been turned into a quadriplegic (and eventually died) as a result of a fiery drunk driving crash. The shock of their personal tragedies was magnified by the shock of discovering that their respective state laws offered few remedies and absolutely no victims' rights in their cases. Working out of their homes, Candy Lightner and Cindy Lamb formed MADD. This initial partnership between two grieving mothers provided the foundation for what has grown to be one of America's most influential and respected social agendas: to prevent drunk driving and provide rights and services for its victims.

Early MADD activists recall a seemingly uphill struggle to change attitudes about drunk driving which was, at that point, one of the most common crimes in the nation. Initial attention from the news media spread the word about their infant movement; slowly, concerned policy makers and insurance companies joined their cause, followed by highway safety advocates and civic organizations. The community-by-community, state-by-state effort slowly grew into a national initiative, which culminated in MADD's introduction of the "21 drinking age bill" in Congress in 1984.

A victim advocate involved in this effort recalls the collaborative strategy that ensued:

We flew to Washington, D.C. planning to conduct a rally at the U.S. Capitol for our "Save Our Students" (SOS) campaign. Once on-site, I remember going through the telephone book, identifying folks who might support our efforts by looking under "associations" in the Yellow Pages. In just a few days, we lined up over 50 national groups--from the Junior League to major insurance companies--to support SOS. As our efforts gathered steam, Congress did as well, garnering support for legislation with incentives and penalties to encourage states to raise their drinking age to 21, which would ultimately save thousands of lives a year.

Through daily meetings of key stakeholders and lots of media coverage, our little rally turned into a major public policy success when then-Secretary of Transportation Elizabeth Dole called us late the night before our event. The White House placed its solid support behind "21" and the rest, as they say, is history! In just five weeks, with local and state MADD chapters working hand-in-hand with the Washington, D.C.-based team, National MADD staff and its new allies, the National Minimum Drinking Age Act of 1984 was passed by Congress. It was, indeed, collaboration at its finest.

The lessons of this early collaborative initiative are clear. When the power of the personal story of victims is combined with grass roots organizing and public policy leadership, the end result can be a powerful, collaborative avalanche of widespread support for positive change. Close relationships and commitment among national, state, and local entities representing both the public and private sectors are essential and valuable elements.

### **Collaboration for Victims' Rights and Services Self-Examination**

1. Name the four "types of working relationships."
2. Describe in detail one challenge to successful working relationships.
3. Identify one stakeholder group that you consider to be "beyond traditional collaboration," and briefly describe why/how they can be engaged and involved in victim issues.
4. Describe one way that victim service providers and allied professionals work together at the local, state, and national levels.
5. Identify three core elements of successful collaboration from this chapter's "checklist for success."

## Chapter 19 Collaboration for Victims' Rights and Services

### References

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